

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 OMB-01 OPR-02 A-01 SIL-01

LAB-06 IGA-02 DRC-01 PER-05 /116 W

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O R 196155Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9150

L NFO RUHQHQA/CINCHAC

SECDEF

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 19633

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, AFSP, ELAB, TH

SUBJECT: PX EMPLOYEES STRIKE CUTS CHRISMTAS SHOPPING

REF: BANGKOK 19576

1. WEEK-LONG STRIKE BY THAI EMPLOYEES OF THAILAND REGIONAL EXCHANGE IS NOW CAUSING CONCERN AMONG AMERICAN DEPENDNTS. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS SOME MAY BE COMPLAINING TO THEIR CONGRESSMEN AND NEWS SERVICES MAY PICK UP SENSATIONAL STORIES; FOLLOWING SITUATON REPORT PROVIDED FOR BACKGROUND IN EVENT OF QUERIES TO DEPARTMENT.

2. LOCAL PX EMPLOYEES WENT OUT ON STRIKE DECEMBER 13, DEMANDING IMMEDIATE PAY INCREASES AS WELL AS INCREASED FRINGE BENEFITS. STRIKE HAS BEEN COORDINATED COUNTRY-WIDE, BUT THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF VIOLENCE. NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN TRE AND EMPLOYEE SPOKESMEN HAVE CONTINUED, WITH GUIDANCE FROM MACTHAI, EMBASSY AND CINCPAC.

3. STRIKE LEADERS HAVE ASSENTED TO OPERATION OF FACILITES ON LIMITED BASIS WITH MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL OR AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS
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AT ALL BASES AND IN BANGKOK WITH AMERICAN MANAGEMENT PERSONEL

ONLY TO MEET ESSENTIAL NEEDS OF AMERICAN CUSTOMERS. MANY ITEMS THAT ARE NOT ESSENTIAL AT OTHER TIMES OF THE YEAR ARE CONSIDERED BY MANY AMERICANS TO BE ESSENTIAL AT CHRISTMAS TIME (TOYS AND OTHER TYPES OF PRESENTS FOR CHILDREN, SPECIAL ORDER ITEMS ORDERED WEEKS AGO FOR CRISTMAS, ETC.). THAI NEGOTIATORS WERE ASKED FOR LIST OF WHAT THEY WOULD AGREE WERE ESSENTIAL ITEMS BUT NO LIST WAS SUBMITTED. INSTEAD COMPALINTS FROM STRIKERS STARTED ON DECEMBER 18 THAT US VIOLATING UNDERSTANDING REGARDING SALE OF ESSENTIAL GOODS ONLY, WITH RUMORS STARTING TO CIRCULATE THAT THE FACILITES MIGHT BE DAMAGED AS A RESULT OF THIS AND OTHER STRIKE RELATED ISSUES. DECISION WAS MADE MORNING DECEMBER 19 TO LIMIT ALL SALES TO ESSENTIAL HEALTH AND COMFORT ITMES IN ORDER TO PREVENT HARDENING OF POSITIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO FORCE COMPLETE CLOSURE OF PX FACILITIES. IMPORTANT THING IS TO AVOID CLASH AND MAINTAINE ATMOSPHERE WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO STRIKERS' RETURN TO WORK. U.S. PERSONNEL CAN, UNDER PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS, PURCHASE MEDICINES AND OTHER ESSENTIAL ITEMS AT PX AND, OF COURSE, OTHER ITEMS ARE READILY AVAILABLE ON LOCAL ECONOMY.

4. TRE NEGOTIATORS ENTERED DECEMBER 19 TALKS WITH NEW SALARY INCREASE PACKAGE KEYED TO STRIKERS' DEMANDS. JUST INFORMED THAT STRIKERS HAVE ACCEPTED AND WILL RETURN TO WORK TOMORROW. KINTNER

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